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A Message from Ambassador Robert Bradtke



Ambassador Bradtke

VOTE NOW!

The Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) should be used if the requested state absentee ballot has not arrived in time to allow the voter to return it by the state deadline for counting. FVAP recommends that U.S. citizens vote and return their regular state absentee ballot, regardless of when they receive it up to and including Election Day. (See more on page 2)

On behalf of my colleagues at the Embassy in Zagreb, I want to extend warm greetings for the autumn edition of our newsletter. This is an exciting time because of positive developments in U.S.-Croatian relations and our own upcoming presidential election.

Our relations with Croatia continue to develop as demonstrated in the Senate's September 28 vote to approve Croatia's accession to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The United States was one of the first countries to vote to approve Croatia's joining NATO, and we eagerly look forward to welcoming Croatia as a full partner before next spring's NATO summit. This vote also confirms our support for Croatia's security and territorial integrity, a major theme of President Bush's trip to Croatia April 2, 2008.

Following President Bush's visit, the Embassy has further strengthened U.S. ties to Croatia through a robust series of cultural and military exchange programs, as well as several trips by senior Croatian leaders to the United States. Foreign Minister Jandrokovic visited Washington in early July to meet with Secretary of State Rice and other officials.

Recently, the Embassy also sponsored the travel of a multi-party delegation of Croatian Parliamentarians to Belgium, the Netherlands and the United States to learn more about NATO firsthand.

We are also moving forward on important issues such as increased trade and investment, enhanced law enforcement cooperation, and the joint effort to move Croatia towards eventual participation in the Visa Waiver Program. And as always, we are glad to see more and more Croatians going the United States as well as an increase in the number of Americans coming to this beautiful country.

Finally, our own presidential election is right around the corner. The Embassy has already helped many of you to exercise your right to vote. While many states' deadlines have passed or will do so shortly, we will continue to offer assistance for voting right up to Election Day.

This newsletter is an opportunity to share our successes in Croatia. Please see our website at <http://Zagreb/usembassy.gov> for additional information, or email our editors with your questions at: ConsularZagreb@state.gov.

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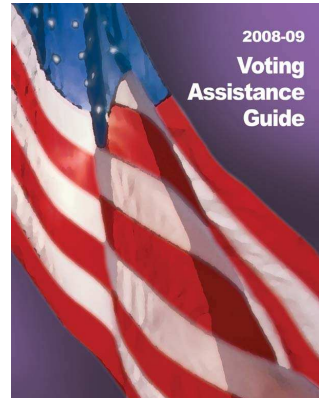
Elections 2008: VOTING ASSISTANCE



To complete the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot:

1. Fill out the form and sign the declaration affirmation (information sheet)

Be Smart. Do your part.



2. Write in your candidate choice on the ballot
3. Submit the declaration affirmation and the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot to your local election official by mail, fax, or email depending on what your state allows (see <http://www.fvap.gov>).

A citizen who receives his or her state ballot after submitting a FWAB up to and including Election Day should also vote using the state ballot and return it to local election officials. If both ballots arrive in time to meet the state's deadline, local officials have procedures in place so that only one ballot is counted. Visit the FVAP website at <http://www.fvap.gov> for more information.

Affidavit, Notary or Witness: The following states require an affidavit, notary or witness signature on the ballot return envelope for both the state issued ballot and the FWAB: Alabama, Alaska, Guam, Louisiana, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Virginia, and Wisconsin.



Late Counting: The following states allow for extended counting of absentee ballots for the November 4, 2008 general election: Alaska, Arkansas, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Maryland, Massachusetts, Montana, New York, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah, Virgin Islands, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. All require the ballot to be voted and mailed no later than the day of the election. For state-by-state specific requirements see: <http://www.fvap.gov>.

Questions: The Voting Assistance Officer at the American Embassy Zagreb is also always available to answer questions about absentee voting. To contact the Voting Assistance Officer, call

+385-1-661-2200 or e-mail to vote.Zagreb@state.gov

Croatia on the Path to NATO Membership

On September 26, the U.S. Senate voted unanimously to provide its advice and consent in favor of ratification of the Accession Protocols for the membership of Croatia and Albania in NATO, which President Bush signed October 25. This important step was a historic moment in the long-standing U.S. effort to welcome Croatia as a full partner and ally in the Euro-Atlantic community. Once all 26 current NATO member countries complete ratification of these protocols and deposit their instruments of ratification, Croatia can become a member of the Alliance. The United States hopes that the process will be complete in time for Croatia to attend the upcoming 60th Anniversary NATO Summit in Strasbourg, France and Kehl, Germany in April 2009 as a full member for the first time.

Embassy Sponsors Trip for Croatian Parliamentarians



Croatian Parliamentarians and U.S. Embassy Political Officer Peter D'Amico at NATO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium.

Embassy Zagreb organized a NATO tour to Brussels, Brunssum, Washington D.C. and Norfolk, Virginia September 3-11 for seven Croatian parliamentarians responsible for military oversight and security issues, including Croatia's NATO accession. The participants gained better insight into the structure and activities of the NATO alliance, the U.S. view of NATO's role and its many partnerships and its growing missions. During the trip, the parliamentarians met with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, as well as with representatives from the State Department and the Pentagon. The parliamentarians also had the

opportunity to attend the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations hearing on Croatia and Albania's accession to NATO and listen to State Department Assistant Secretary for European Affairs Daniel Fried's remarks on NATO's invitation to Croatia. U.S. Senators Christopher Dodd (D-Connecticut) and Richard Lugar (R-Indiana) spoke with the parliamentarians after the hearing and joined them for a photo opportunity. The Embassy will continue to cooperate with Croatia on its path to full NATO membership and beyond to help ensure the peace and security of Croatia and the entire region.

Croatia and NATO

One of Croatia's key foreign policy goals is to join NATO. The United States strongly supports Croatia's integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions and actively assists Croatia as it seeks membership in NATO. Croatia became a member of NATO's Partnership for Peace in 2000 and joined NATO's Membership Action Plan in 2002, committing itself to defense and political reforms necessary for NATO membership. Croatia and Albania received invitations to join NATO April 2008 during the Bucharest Summit (**SEE NEXT**

U.S. Embassy Outreach



FCS Officer Pamela Ward Participates in Grand Opening of Black and Decker Service Center in Zagreb.

Embassy Welcomes New Commercial Officer

The Embassy welcomes its new Foreign Commercial Service (FCS) Officer Pamela Ward to Zagreb. As the FCS head in Croatia, Ms. Ward will assist U.S. exporters in their efforts to market and sell their products and services in Croatia. FCS is continually looking for individuals and companies that have the interest and capacity to represent or distribute U.S. products in the Croatian market and would welcome inquiries from established firms looking to expand their lines with quality American goods and services. As part of her job, Ms. Ward also represents the United States at business related events and trade fairs. She has already had recent success with the opening of Black and Decker's new service and sales facility in Zagreb at Skorpika 1a.



(Continued from page 3): due to the progress made by both countries in meeting NATO standards. While the United States eagerly looks forward to welcoming Croatia as a full member of NATO, it is important to note that Croatia is already a valued NATO partner. Croatia helps contribute to peace and security around the world by participating in NATO peacekeeping operations such as the mission to Afghanistan.



Embassy Zagreb Sponsors Native American Music Festival

In cooperation with the Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the U.S. Embassy helped sponsor the Croatian American Society's third annual "Red Rocks Arts and Crafts Festival." Headlined by celebrated Native American musicians Joseph FireCrow and Keith Secola, the festival featured concerts and workshops in Osijek, Opatija, and Zagreb. Joseph FireCrow is a flautist who was nominated for a Grammy award in 2001. Some of FireCrow's music is featured on the soundtrack of the Ken Burns' documentary, "Lewis and Clark: The Journey of the Corps of Discovery." Native folk blues rocker Keith Secola is an award-winning musician, master guitarist and native flute player. His song, "NDN Kars," is considered the contemporary Native American anthem and is the most requested song on Native radio in the United States and Canada.

CONSULAR CORNER

Registering with the U.S. Embassy

U.S. citizens visiting and residing in Croatia are encouraged to register through the U.S. Department of State's automated online registration system: <https://travelregistration.state.gov>. Registration allows the Embassy to contact you in an emergency or let you know if someone in the U.S. is trying to reach you.

We also recommend that you leave a copy of your itinerary with someone in the United States.

Contact the American Citizens Services Unit of the US Embassy at:

ZagrebACS@state.gov

Note: In accordance with the Privacy Act, information on your welfare or whereabouts will not be released without your written authorization.

For general information on traveling overseas, please see the Department of State's **Tips for Traveling Abroad**. You can also find other information useful for travelers as well as country specific information at <http://www.travel.state.gov>

Warden System: The Warden system provides a way for the Embassy to contact U.S. citizens in the event of an emergency, disaster or threat as well as to distribute other information of interest to the private U.S. community. Wardens are U.S. citizens who volunteer their assistance to pass on information from the Embassy. In consideration of privacy concerns, wardens sign an agreement to safeguard any information about U.S. citizens in their warden district.

If you would like to serve as a warden in Croatia or have any other questions about our warden system, please contact the Consular Section at the U.S. Embassy in Zagreb, Tel. 01-661-2276 or 661-2233.

Emails and Text Messages: We are modernizing our warden system to use email addresses and cell phone numbers (for text messages) to reach U.S. citizens in case of an emergency. In an emergency, a consular officer will send a short text message to let you know what is going on and where you can find more information. Complete warden messages will still be posted on our website at <http://Zagreb.usembassy.gov>. To be a part of our network, please send us your cell phone number and email address if you have not done so already.

Travel Warnings and Alerts: Travel Warnings are issued to describe long-term, protracted conditions that make a country dangerous or unstable. A Travel Warning is also issued when the U.S. Government's ability to assist American citizens is constrained due to the closure of an embassy or consulate or because of a drawdown of its staff.

Travel Alerts are issued by the Department of State to disseminate information about short-term conditions, generally within a particular country, that pose imminent risks to the security of U.S. citizens. Natural disasters, terrorist attacks, coups, anniversaries of terrorist events, election-related demonstrations or violence, and high-profile events such as international conferences or regional sports events are examples of conditions that might generate a Travel Alert events.

A current list of worldwide Travel Warnings and Alerts, as well as Country Specific Information for every country of the world can be found on the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Consular Affairs website at www.travel.state.gov. Travelers can also find up-to-date information by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the U.S. and Canada or outside the U.S. and Canada on a toll line at 1-202-501-4444. Questions can also be sent to the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy at ZagrebACS@state.gov.

Upcoming Events

Nov 6: U.S. jazz musicians, The Dave Holland Jazz Quartet will perform at the VIP Zagreb Jazz Festival

Nov 11: Embassy will be closed for Veterans Day

Nov 27: Embassy will be closed for Thanksgiving

Dec 25-26: Embassy will be closed for Christmas and St. Stephen's Holiday

Current News: Work Visas In Croatia

Many U.S. citizens have inquired about the changes to Croatia's visa law (effective January 2008) which prohibit family members of foreigners in Croatia from obtaining residence status until the principal applicant has been resident in Croatia for two years. The law also states that foreign workers cannot leave Croatia for more than 30 days without jeopardizing their residence and work status. In addition, NGO representatives, religious workers, retirees and some teachers have reported that their visas are now being limited to six months per calendar year.

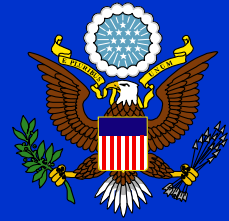
The U.S. Embassy is working closely with officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior to work on amendments to the law that will benefit U.S. citizens and other foreigners living and working in Croatia. In the meantime, both ministries advise individuals seeking visas for business or religious work in Croatia and residence permits for their family members to contact the Ministry of the Interior directly. The Ministry will decide residency applications on a case-by-case basis. The American Chamber of Commerce also continues its work to discuss the law with the ministries in an effort to effect changes that will allow U.S. citizens to continue to work and live with their families in Croatia. The U.S. Embassy will continue to keep American citizens apprised of new developments.

For more information contact the **American Chamber of Commerce at: 48-36-77 Fax: 48 36776; email: info@amcham.hr and www.amcham.hr** Religious workers should contact the **Commission for Relations With Religious Communities at 6177-038**. You may also contact the **American Citizen Services Unit at the U.S. Embassy at ZagrebACS@state.gov**.

U.S. Embassy

Ulica Thomasa Jeffersona 2
10010 Zagreb

Phone: 385-1-661-2200



We're on the Web!

www.usembassy.hr

Contact us

If you have a question for the U.S. Embassy staff or an idea for an article in a future edition, write to us at:

ConsularZagreb@state.gov